

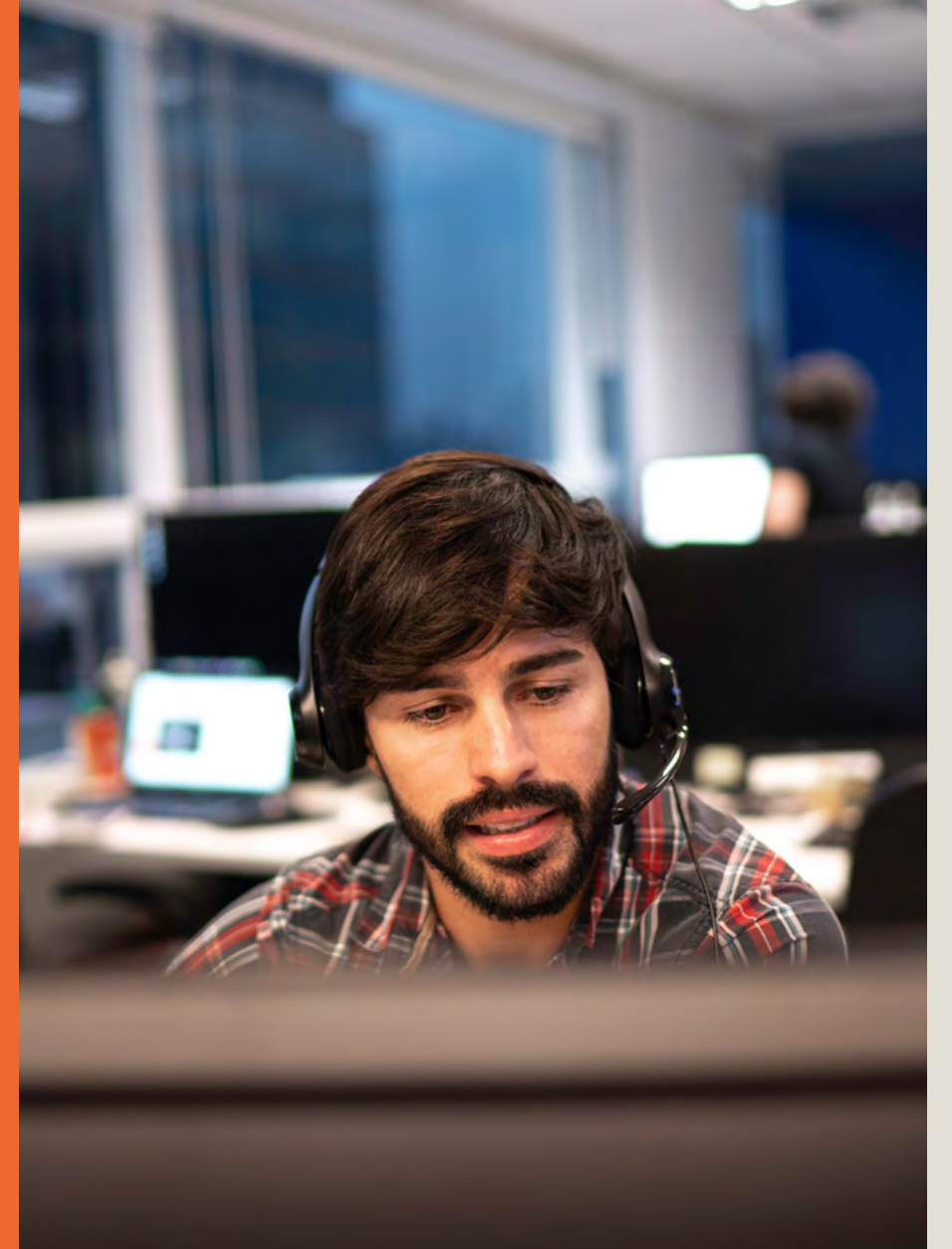
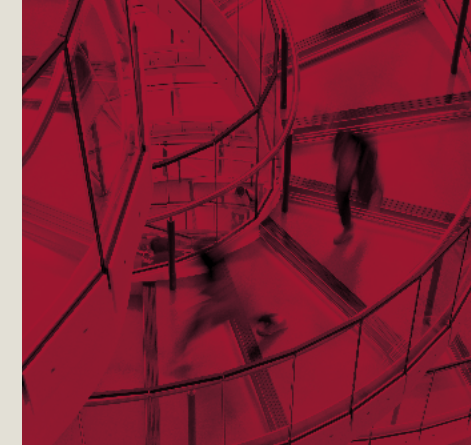



The What's Next Handbook for Employees

skillsoft

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Introduction

It's hard to believe that it's only been a matter of months since so many of us changed the way we conduct business and live our lives. The so-called "new normal" will be remembered as a time of working remotely, homeschooling, social distancing, and doing whatever we can to safeguard the health and wellness of ourselves, our families, neighbors, and friends.

Today, throughout the country, businesses are starting or making plans to reopen. What will that look like? How will we reset our behavior and habits? Can we reboot the economy while maintaining all that we've done to protect ourselves?

Every business – and workforce – must address these questions in its own unique way. But, there are also commonalities. Changes in attitude, policies, and procedures will be necessary in what we're calling the three pillars of the "next normal," the individual, his or her impact, and the workplace community.



As an individual contributor, in the coming months, you'll rely on your own resilience and mindfulness. You'll need to stay engaged and look for ways to be more effective. And, you'll need to manage your own overall wellness (physical and emotional), for your sake and for those around you.

We don't yet know exactly how the coming months will look and feel. But, we can all work together as we redefine it and build a safer, more productive next normal.

For more insights about the coming transition, [read this](#).



Back to “Business as Usual?”

How and where many of us work has undergone a lot of change in recent months. The global pandemic forced many of us to work in new environments and learn to connect with each other, our managers, and our customers in new ways. Now, as we slowly emerge from the global pandemic, we need to reimagine what business will look like. The workplace may never be the same and you may need to adjust to a whole new way of working.

Use this handbook to help guide you as you prepare to return to your workplace in the post-pandemic world.



The Post-Pandemic Workplace

Just as quarantine has been a different experience for everyone, so too will be the return to work experience. You adapted to the realities of shelter-in-place orders, social distancing, and remote work. Soon you'll need to transition back into the workplace by showing the same flexibility, resolve, and resiliency.

You and your company: a post-pandemic partnership

You can:

- Maintain appropriate social distance
- Stay home if you're sick
- Adhere to new policies
- Raise any issues you may have

Your company can:

- Create a safe and healthy environment
- Put policies in place to mitigate health risks
- Provide hygiene products and any necessary PPE
- Address worker concerns

Communication is still key.

Sensitivity and awareness of your own – and your colleagues' – health, safety, wellness, and well-being will be crucial to successfully transitioning back into the workplace. So too, will be consistent and continuous communication with your:



Manager



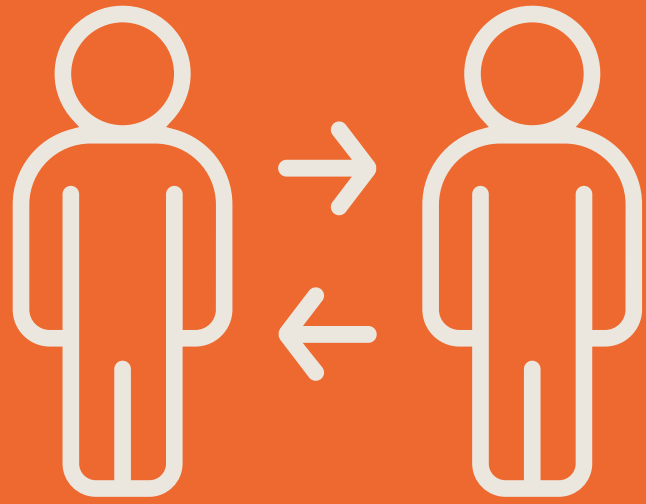
Organizational leaders



Human Resources team

You can begin this now by reaching out and creating clear and open lines of communication, as well as listening to, observing, and empathizing with your colleagues.

For more tips, [watch this video.](#)



Social distancing at work.

Social distancing is not going away any time soon. Even as people return to centralized workplaces, they're still going to need to keep their distance. How will this look in your office or job site?

New ways of working together.

When you do eventually return to your workplace, you may have to adapt to new cultural norms. For example, you'll want to be more aware of, and sensitive to, personal and professional boundaries.

- Resist the traditional business handshake
- Be respectful of others' preferences and comfort levels

Depending upon cultural and business backgrounds, modifying your behavior may take some adjustment and a conscious effort to remember. But being patient and asking for permission can go a long way in setting a positive and supportive workplace culture.

Cleanliness is everyone's job.

Chances are, there will be new rules in place surrounding the cleaning and maintenance of your work environment. Take the time to learn and follow your company's policies and guidelines on cleanliness and sanitary practices. Work with your manager and operations teams to ensure you have the resources and materials to properly sanitize your work areas. As you strive to keep your own work areas clean, you'll also have to be vigilant about how you contribute to the cleanliness of common areas.

For more points to note when returning to the workplace, [watch this video](#).



Staying Healthy is Job One

Although everyone is eager to get back to business, your health and safety, as well as that of your coworkers, friends, and family, is your most important priority. Be honest and open with your manager or supervisor if you begin to experience any symptoms of illness – whether they're COVID-19 related or not. The pandemic has reminded all of us that when you're ill, you should stay at home and away from others.

Use proper, sanitized, hygiene products.

Depending on your unique situation, you can expect your company to make protective products available and replenish them as needed.

These may include:

- Disposable tissues and hand towels
- No-touch trash cans
- Hand sanitizer
- Facemasks or cloth coverings that align with current CDC recommendations and ADA guidelines
- Other PPE as needed

If you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been in contact with someone who has, communicate with both your doctor and your manager to determine next steps that are consistent with your medical needs and the safety of your organization.

Need more tips about staying healthy? [Watch this.](#)

Emotions and mental health.

The pandemic brought with it a great many changes. While many have been temporarily inconvenient, some will have more personal, lasting effects. You and your coworkers may be returning to the workplace while processing some deep and strong emotions.

For many, coworkers are like an extended family. After all, we spend the greatest part of our waking hours with them. Through these friendships, you'll be able to pull together, creating even stronger bonds by having worked through shared emotional difficulties. This coming together is important.

Just as your tasks and responsibilities may have changed during self-quarantine, they may continue to shift and evolve as you return to the workplace. Going through change can also lead to stress. It's important, when possible, to process your emotions. Share your feelings as appropriate to the time and place.

For more information about the connection between work and stress, [watch this.](#)

Take advantage of employee assistance programs.

If you find you are struggling to focus and regain balance, you owe it to yourself to get help. It's not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength as you recognize your own limitations and the need for assistance. Speak to your manager or turn to Human Resources for any support you need. They're there for you.

Other helpful resources:

In addition to following all national and local guidelines, you can consult:



- **The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)**



- **The World Health Organization (WHO)**





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As you go back to the workplace, your strength, resilience, and mindfulness will help you successfully transition into whatever the new normal brings. It's up to you to be on your own best advocate for keeping yourself mentally and physically safe as you leave home and go back on the job. What the post-pandemic workspace looks like is yet to be determined, but thinking it through and being prepared will go a long way to ensuring that it's safe, healthy, and sustainable.

About Skillsoft and SumTotal

We help companies unlock the potential in their most valuable asset – their people – by delivering engaging content and powerful technology that drives business impact for modern enterprises. Skillsoft comprises three award-winning systems that support learning, performance, and success: Skillsoft learning content, the Percipio intelligent learning experience platform, and the SumTotal suite for Talent Development.

Skillsoft provides a comprehensive selection of cloud-based corporate learning content, including courses, videos, books, and other resources on Leadership Development, Business Skills, Digital Transformation, Technology & Developer, and Compliance. Percipio's intuitive design engages modern learners and its consumer-led experience assists in accelerating learning. The SumTotal suite delivers measurable impact across the entire employee lifecycle via award-winning technology that powers talent acquisition, learning management, and talent management. Skillsoft and SumTotal are trusted by thousands of the world's leading organizations, including many within the Fortune 500.

Learn more at **www.skillsoft.com** and **www.sumtotalsystems.com**.

